

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 5-10, 14, 19-21 and 26-27 are pending in the application (claims 3-4, 11-13, 15-18 and 22-25 having been previously cancelled). Claims 1 and 5 are amended herein.

Claims 1 and 5 are independent.

Claims 1, 2 & 5-10 stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a), as obvious over Nishikawa (JP Publication No 2000-300729) in view of Sakamoto (U.S. Patent No. 6,315,663), and further in view of Ishida (JP Publication No. 09-253271). Claims 14, 19-21, and 26-27 stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a), as obvious over Nishikawa, Sakamoto and Ishida further in view of "Applied Admitted Prior Art" under MPEP §2129 (II) and §2144.03, Section C.

Each of independent claims 1 and 5 is amended to further require that the shielding control device can overlap an unshielded area with an illuminating area under control of the CPU, and the illuminating control device controls each of the plurality of illumination devices under control of the CPU so as to cast light on the illuminating area

The added limitations find support in the specification descriptions at page 29, lines 23 to 26, and page 30, lines 6 to 14, and in FIGS 15-18.

As described on page 29, lines 23-26, "Reel back lamp control circuit 240 controls the blinking of reel back lamps 42L, 42C, and 42R based on parameters determined by sub-microcomputer 202."

As described on page 30, lines 6-14, "An electronic shutter control circuit 260 performs transmitting/shielding control of electronic shutter 22, disposed between the image display device 21 and reels 24L, 24C, and 24R, in accordance with whether or not voltage is applied, and by performing shielding control of the necessary display areas based on contents determined by sub-microcomputer 202, shields inner areas of the image display device 21 that are designated as not being visually recognizable to a player."

The Office Action asserts that claims 1 and 5 are unpatentable over Nishikawa in view of Sakamoto and Ishida.

As amended herein, each of claims 1 and 5 now explicitly requires that the shielding control device be able to control the shielding device or shutter (as applicable)

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to overlap an unshielded area with an illuminated area under control of the CPU, and that the illuminating control device control each of the plurality of illumination devices under control of the CPU so as to cast light on the illuminated area.

In contrast, neither Nishikawa, Sakamoto nor Ishida discloses or suggests such limitations. Hence, it is respectfully submitted that the applied combination does not make obvious the technical features of amended claims 1 and 5.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the present invention is patentably distinguishable over Nishikawa in view of Sakamoto and Ishida, and respectfully requested that the obviousness rejection of the claims be reconsidered and withdrawn in view of the above.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance and an early indication of the same is courteously solicited. The Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned by telephone at the below listed local telephone number, in order to expedite resolution of any remaining issues and further to expedite passage of the application to issue, if any further comments, questions or suggestions arise in connection with the application.

To the extent necessary, Applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR § 1.136. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to the Deposit Account No. 01-2135 (Case No.1227.43065X00) and please credit any excess fees to such Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,
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